



September 29, 2004
 Steve Williams,
 Acting Forest Supervisor
 Nez. Perce National
 Route 2, Box 475
 Grangeville, ID 83530

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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
 AND RECREATION

p.o. box 83720
 boise, idaho 83720-0065

(208) 334-4199

fax (208) 334-3741

tdd 1-800-377-3529

street address
 5657 Warm Springs Avenue

RE: Red Pines Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Williams:

Staff reviewed the Red Pines Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The project's purpose is to treat existing and potential fuel loads, improve the safety for firefighters, and contribute to the economic and social well being of residents and visitors.

The project area is large and contains several developed recreation facilities and trails. The area is also popular with the snowmobiling public. We were pleased to see the project design measures included several features to protect recreation facilities and opportunities. We believe that these design features are adequate to protect these facilities and opportunities.

One of the project design measures requires staff to coordinate winter hauling on roads used as groomed snowmobile routes. Staff should try to avoid these routes if possible. In the event that an alternate route can't be found, we recommend that logging activity stop after December 15. This date allows some snowmobiling activity to occur.

All of the proposed action alternatives would decommission various roads within the project area. It is our understanding, that the Nez Perce National Forest is only going to decommission roads already closed yearlong to motorized use. Road decommissioning can be a controversial issue. By decommissioning roads that are already closed and overgrown, the loss of these roads is less controversial.

After taking a look at the project area maps, it appears that a system trail will be affected by road decommissioning. The trail that runs along the ridge above Little Moose Creek uses a portion of a road proposed for decommissioning. The forest should protect the trail where it uses the road.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Red Pines DEIS. If you have any questions, contact Jeff Cook, Outdoor Recreation Analyst at (208) 334-4180 ext. 230.

Sincerely,


 Rick Just,

Coordinator
 Comprehensive Planning, Research, and Review

www.parksand recreation.idaho.gov

Response 8-1. Recreation, facilities, design features.
 Thank you

Response 8-2. Recreation, roads, hauling, groomed snowmobile routes.
 The Forest will coordinate any winter hauling activation on groomed snowmobile routes. See FEIS, Chapter II, Table II-2, items # 23.

Response 8-3. Recreation, roads, decommissioning, change in access.
 Section 3.13 of the FEIS displays the miles of road and their current status that are proposed for decommissioning.

The following are the approximate percentages of the total road miles proposed for decommissioning corresponding to current access status for various modes of travel, with Alternative E.

Open Year-round to All Motorized Vehicles	2%
Open Seasonally to Highway Vehicles	5%
Open Seasonally to Trail Vehicles	6%
Open to Snowmobiles	22%
Closed Year-round to All Motorized Vehicles	74%

The sum of the percentages does not equal 100 because there is some overlap between access categories.

Refer to FEIS section 3.1.6 and Appendices C and H for the roads that are proposed for decommissioning, as well as the current status of, and recommended treatment for, each of the roads.

Response 8-4. Trail, road decommissioning, maintain access.
 Protect the portion of the road that will be decommissioned, to continue to provide access as a trail.

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